

VZCZCXRO2509
OO RUEHIK RUEHPOD RUEHYG
DE RUEHTH #1487 2062227
ZNR UUUUU ZZH
O 252227Z JUL 07
FM AMEMBASSY ATHENS
TO RUEHC/SECSTATE WASHDC IMMEDIATE 9759
INFO RUEHZG/NATO EU COLLECTIVE IMMEDIATE
RUEHBM/AMEMBASSY BUCHAREST IMMEDIATE 0951
RUEHSQ/AMEMBASSY SKOPJE IMMEDIATE 1050
RUEHTI/AMEMBASSY TIRANA IMMEDIATE 1243
RUEHIK/AMCONSUL THESSALONIKI IMMEDIATE 1414
RHMFIUU/SECNAV WASHINGTON DC IMMEDIATE
RUEKJCS/JOINT STAFF WASHDC IMMEDIATE RUEKJCS/OSD WASHINGTON DC IMMEDIATE
RHMFIUU/NVSUPPACT NAPLES IT IMMEDIATE
RUEHRC/DEPT OF AGRICULTURE WASHINGTON DC IMMEDIATE
RHMFIUU/NAVSPACT SOUDA BAY GR IMMEDIATE
RUEPGCA/USEUCOM AIDES VAHINGEN GE IMMEDIATE
RUEKJCS/SECDEF WASHINGTON DC IMMEDIATE
RUEPGDA/USEUCOM JIC VAHINGEN GE IMMEDIATE
RUDKSR/EUCOM PLANS AND ANALYSIS STAFF STUTTGART GE IMMEDIATE

UNCLAS ATHENS 001487

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E.O. 12958: N/A

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SUBJECT: GREECE URGENTLY REQUESTS U.S. ASSISTANCE IN
FIGHTING FIRES

1. (U) On July 25, Greece formally requested U.S. assistance in its efforts to fight forest fires, which have devastated many areas of the country and are overwhelming the Greek fire service. The request was made by Foreign Minister Dora Bakoyannis to Charge D'Affaires, a.i., Tom Countryman and reflected a similar request from Greece to the EU. Bakoyannis asked for any assistance the U.S. could offer but did not specify any particular type of equipment or support. From our monitoring of Greece's efforts to fight the fires, it appears that the Greek fire service is stretched beyond its limits. We believe any firefighting aircraft, ships, trucks, equipment, or other assistance from military and/or civilian sources would be most welcomed and much appreciated.

2. Over the last few weeks, hundreds of fires in many parts of the country have destroyed valuable forest areas and caused widespread damage to private property. Several deaths have also been reported, including two Greek firefighters. Although forest fires are a regular seasonal occurrence in Greece, the large number and the size of the fires this year have overwhelmed the Greek fire service. Firefighting aircraft are an almost daily occurrence in the skies over Athens, which has seen several fires burning in its outskirts -- including one last week visible from the Embassy.
COUNTRYMAN